# THE REASON WHY.

IN ANSWER

TO

*A PAMPHLET*

ENTITLED,

"WHY DO WE GO TO WAR?"

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR JOHN STOCKDALE, PICCADILLY.

1803.

*Price One Shilling and Sixpence.*

S. Gosnell, Printer,
Little Queen Street, Holborn.

# THE REASON WHY,

*&c.*

---

An extraordinary publication has juſt made its appearance, aſking as abſurd a queſtion as can well be put to the common ſenſe of the Britiſh empire, viz. "Why do we go to war?" It might as well be aſked, Why do we wiſh to preſerve our privileges and enjoyments as individuals, or our independence as a nation? True it is, that the author, whoſoever he may be, has taken abundance of time to ponder over the ſubject before he ventured to make his lucubrations public, and has, no doubt, carefully rummaged every corner of his brain in queſt of ſome ſpecious argument in excuſe for his profound ignorance, or in extenuation of his inflexible ſcepticiſm, or in defence of his wilful miſrepreſentation.

I was, I own, rather curious to ſee, eſpecially as the work is attributed, if not to a loyal ſubject, at leaſt to an expert diſputant, what could poſſibly be advanced in ſupport of the opinion which was

indicated by the title-page; which I knew was in direct contradiction to positive facts; and which was consequently untenable by any fair mode of reasoning. But the perusal of it, notwithstanding the labour of the author to assume a plausible ground, has only served to convince me more firmly, that the question, with regard to the present war, is so clear and unembarrassed, so broadly founded on the common sense, and so immediately applying to the common feeling, of mankind, that no ingenuity or art can twist it into an opposite direction, or mould it into a contrary shape. There are, however, some men so closely wedded to their own false systems, and so desirous of gaining proselytes to their absurdities, that, in their efforts to represent things as they wish them in reality to exist, rather than abandon their hopes and views, when they are unable to convince by argument, they strive to mislead by subterfuge.

Such seems to be the scope which our author has given to his talents; and such being the mischievous purpose of his pamphlet, although not written with any extraordinary degree of acumen, or in a manner to produce the smallest impression on the minds of well-informed people; yet as, by falling into the hands of the illiterate, it might, if unanswered, operate with a prejudicial tendency on their judgments, I have undertaken briefly to

expoſe the fallacy, inconſiſtency, and miſrepreſentation which it contains.

Our author opens the ſcene by informing us, that the laſt war brought us to the "brink of a precipice*;" and his humanity is exceſſively ſhocked, that we ſhould be ſo ſoon "again involved in a conflict that has every appearance of being more ferocious, more inveterate than the laſt;" and which, of courſe, in his opinion, muſt inevitably plunge us into the abyſs.

I certainly am as averſe from war, abſtractedly conſidered, as any man. I as plainly perceive its miſeries, and as ſincerely lament its neceſſity. But, when I declare this, I at the ſame time contend that there may be ſituations to which the calamities of war, great and terrible as they unqueſtionably are, muſt comparatively be regarded as bleſſings. When, therefore, we perceived that ſuch a ſituation, the bare contemplation of which creates horror, was rapidly preparing for us, and that we could only eſcape from it by a prompt reſolution to reſiſt; when we had reached ſuch perilous extremities; when, after being long deluded, we ſuddenly awoke to a juſt apprehenſion of the dangers which were hemming us in; ſurely, between the choice of ſuch alternatives, no wiſe, or pru-

* Page 3.

dent, or brave, or honourable man, could allow himſelf to heſitate for a moment. Under ſuch urgent circumſtances, he would not ſtop before he decided (as our author would have him) to deliberate on queſtions of finance, or to aſcertain the extent of the taxes, and the amount of the national debt; but, convinced of the imperious neceſſity of inſtantaneous exertion, the ſtrongeſt impulſe of his feelings would be the diſcharge of his duty, and the only object of his ſolicitude the ſalvation of his country. Other conſiderations may be poſtponed with ſafety; but to demur about the aſſertion of national independence is a deſperate experiment.

Our author ſays, that, ſituated as we were, "the cauſe *ſhould* have been the moſt obvious, the moſt ſtriking to the ſenſes of every individual in the kingdom, from the well-informed politician to the meaneſt mechanic, the ſimpleſt peaſant of the land; a cauſe that ſhould have urged him to ſnatch the firſt hedge-ſtake in his way to oppoſe an inſulting and aggreſſive foe *." And was it not ſuch a cauſe, in the judgment of every inhabitant in the kingdom, ſave a few, who (from what *good* motives I know not) ſide with our author? Has not nearly *every* politician, *every* mechanic, *every* peaſant, not by a mute and ambi-

* Page 4.

guous aſſent, but by the deciſive teſtimony of active loyalty and patriotic zeal, which he has voluntarily diſplayed, confirmed the aſſertion? Has not the generous emulation with which all ranks and deſcriptions of people have ſtood forward, an emulation manifeſted in different ways, according to their different means, unparalleled in the hiſtory of mankind, and which has induced them cheerfully to ſacrifice all private eaſe and advantage to a ſenſe of public duty, borne evidence to the fact? If ever a war was juſt and neceſſary, and if ever an opinion of that juſtice and neceſſity could be plainly demonſtrated by the general voice and action of a nation, in what manner could it be more unequivocally expreſſed than it has been on the preſent occaſion?

Our author next finds fault with the meſſage of the 8th of March, and tells us, there could be no juſt cauſe of alarm, becauſe there were at that time "but two frigates in the roads of Holland, and but three corvettes in the roads of Dunkirk *." And are theſe then the only two places to be diſcovered along the extenſive and formidable range of coaſt which is ſubject to the power and influence of France? Was ſhe not fitting out large armaments at Helvoetſluys and Fluſhing? Was ſhe inactive at Havre, Cherburg, Breſt, and Tou-

* Page 4.

lon, her great naval arſenals? Had not the recruiting ſervice been carried on with unabated diligence, and even by extraordinary levies, in every department of the republic? Had we not been repeatedly inſulted and aggrieved in various ways? Had not the Chief Conſul publicly boaſted to the Legiſlative Body and to the Britiſh Ambaſſador of his military force, and of what it was able and willing to accompliſh? Did all theſe concurring circumſtances afford no juſt ground of jealouſy, precaution, or diſtruſt? Were they to be regarded as the common occurrences of the day, matters of mere indifference, and, as ſuch, totally unworthy of our notice?

Having diſmiſſed theſe preliminary topics, our author now enters into what he would fain make appear an impartial and candid inveſtigation of the eight principal cauſes of diſpute, as ſtated in his Majeſty's Declaration; and, by garbling a few unconnected paſſages from the maſs of correſpondence, ſuch as he is conſcious will beſt ſuit his purpoſe, he labours hard to ſhew, that the conduct of France has been temperate, dignified, and ſincere, and that of Britain haſty, inſulting, and perfidious. But, in ſpite of the aid which he has occaſionally derived from this unfair mode of repreſentation, he has completely failed in the concluſions he has, with ſo much anxiety, at-

tempted to eſtabliſh. This I ſhall very eaſily prove.

In this regular attack, he begins by ſaying, "The firſt, and perhaps the heavieſt charge, reſpects the confiſcation of our merchant-ſhips *." This certainly was no ſlight cauſe of complaint; but our author endeavours to explain it away by remarking, that "in the early part of the laſt war the French prohibited the importation of Engliſh goods and manufactures, which prohibition they did not think proper to take off at the peace;" and further, "that they had an undoubted right to make what regulations and reſtrictions they pleaſed †." As far as their own country was concerned, they certainly had the *right*. But does poſſeſſing the right always juſtify the exertion of it? It was ſurely natural to expect that a rigid prohibition, which had been enacted during war, and which had ariſen out of the very circumſtance of the hoſtile ſituation of the two countries, ſhould terminate at the reſtoration of peace. But if, after the ceſſation of hoſtilities, inſtead of its repeal, or even its mitigation, we find it as obſtinately perſevered in, and as rigorouſly enforced as ever, to put the mildeſt conſtruction on ſuch a conduct, it muſt be obvious that it betrayed a malevolent and unfriendly diſpoſition. It avowed

* Page 5. † Ibid.

a determination to continue the injury, after the cauſe for which it was inflicted was removed; and although a formal act of reconciliation had been ratified, it ſeemed deſigned to keep alive, inſtead of burying in oblivion, not only the remembrance but the inconveniences and penalties of paſt diſſenſions. But this was not all: theſe ſymptoms of an alienated and malignant mind were not left to mere negative ſuſpicion, they were confirmed and aggravated by overt acts.

By the treaty of Amiens, it was expreſſly ſtipulated, that all ſequeſtrations impoſed in France and England, on the property of the ſubjects of the reſpective countries, ſhould, on the ratification of peace, be immediately taken off*; and it was clearly implied, that an open and amicable communication ſhould be reſtored, and that every facility ſhould be afforded, which was likely to cement a mutually good underſtanding between the two countries. We faithfully and punctually performed our part; but the French government not only refuſed to extend the ſame rights to Britiſh ſubjects, but, in defiance of the reiterated remonſtrances of the Britiſh Miniſter, which they never deigned to anſwer, continued to inſult our flag, and ſeize our ſhips. They not only denied us thoſe privileges which they had agreed

* Definitive Treaty, Art. 14.

to allow, but ſingling us out as objects of particular antipathy, they, in numerous inſtances, liberally granted to every other country what they rigorouſly withheld from us. They not only objected to enter into any commercial arrangement with us themſelves, but they openly exerted all their authority and influence to interrupt or diſſolve our connexion with other ſtates. Severe as their laws actually were againſt this country, they did not conceive it neceſſary merely to adhere to the proviſions they contained, but, in order more effectually to haraſs and injure our trade, they ſtrained them far beyond any conſtruction they would bear. Not content with ſeizing veſſels, on board which was Britiſh property, coming within four leagues of the French coaſt, which they had decreed were liable to confiſcation, they equally captured and condemned thoſe which contained *no* Britiſh property, which had been driven into their harbours by ſtreſs of weather, and for which no latitude of interpretation could furniſh them with the ſlighteſt pretence *. Was this the part of a friend? Was it even the part of a neutral? Was it not the part of a foe? I ſee no reaſon to preſume, as our author does, that our government was ſatisfied as to theſe points. They might not,

* On theſe intereſting ſubjects, ſee the Correſpondence, from p. 177 to p. 189.

indeed, have considered them as likely to lead to a rupture; they might have hoped that the French government would at last have yielded to the justice of their claims. But as to their being satisfied, the direct contrary is proved, not only by the repeated applications and remonstrances of Mr. Jackson and Mr. Merry, but also by those of my Lord Whitworth, one of which was addressed to Buonaparte himself in the conference that took place between them in the month of February of the present year *. So much for the first charge!

The second charge, our author continues, relates to the commercial agents, who, he admits, were sent into this country, to be stationed at our different sea-ports, and who, amongst other private instructions (which were fortunately intercepted by the vigilance of our government), were provided with the two following:

Instruction 11. "You are required to furnish a plan of the ports of your district, with a specification of the soundings for mooring vessels."

Instruction 12. "If no plan of the ports can be procured, you are to point out with what wind vessels can come in and go out, and what is the

* Correspondence, No. 38.

greateſt draught of water with which veſſels can enter therein deeply laden *."

All this, however, our author profeſſes to think of very lightly, and endeavours to exculpate the French government even from the ſurmiſe of any ſiniſter motive, by obſerving, that "this information was really neceſſary in a commercial point of view merely;" and that, as for plans of our ports, and ſoundings of our harbours, "they may be purchaſed at any good mapſeller's ſhop in London †." This may poſſibly be true: but, in the firſt inſtance, why appoint commercial agents? During the continuance of the commercial treaty, there was a cloſe and extenſive intercourſe between the two countries, no ſuch agents were appointed, nor was their neceſſity felt. It ſurely then *does* ſeem rather paradoxical, that if the ſervices of French agents could be conveniently diſpenſed with at the former period, they ſhould be ſo abſolutely requiſite at the latter. For what were they wanted? Not for the purpoſes of trade, for none exiſted. The French government evidently, therefore, had ſome other object in contemplation. But let me further aſk, why were they diſtributed in our ſea-port towns? Why were they all ſelected, not from merchants, or from thoſe whoſe habits of life had led them to

* Page 6. † Ibid.

turn their minds to the inveſtigation of commercial inquiries, but from engineers and other military men, who had ſignalized themſelves in the republican army? Why was one of the moſt active and expert ordered to repair to Ireland? Why, after his eſtabliſhment there, was he furniſhed with private inſtructions, conveyed in a clandeſtine manner? Why, if the information ſought after could have been procured in any mapſeller's ſhop in London, was this circuitous mode preferred? Why, if it was to anſwer ſome commercial view *merely*, was not the Britiſh government candidly applied to? The anſwer to theſe interrogatories is obvious. The appointment alone, conſidering the circumſtances under which it took place, was ſufficient to awaken ſuſpicion. The myſtery and ſecrecy which attended it amounted almoſt to a poſitive proof of guilt. The inſtructions, which *were* intercepted, fell by chance into our hands. They are not of the moſt harmleſs caſt; and from what they diſcloſe, is it not fair to infer that others, of a ſtill more offenſive tendency, eſcaped detection? And do they not lead us to gueſs at the nature of the inſtructions theſe emiſſaries received antecedent to their departure from France? If they were innocent, why did the French ſo quietly acquieſce in their ſudden diſmiſſal? Why did they not aſſert their innocence, and, by courting inveſtigation, remove the imputation of guilt? The fact is, ſelf-

conviction told them that their intentions were dishonest; and the excuse they invented could only be regarded as an unmanly prevarication, or a barefaced falsehood. Mr. Otto's *conciliatory* letter, quoted by our author *, and several other corresponding propositions respecting trade, were certainly presented by the French government; but the moment the British government shewed a serious disposition to come to a definitive settlement, insurmountable obstacles were instantly started by France, and some fresh cause of delay was interposed.

The third charge, that of desiring us to send away the emigrants, is certainly the least important one; and our author does allow (because, I suppose, it *is* the least important) that we acted with "manliness and humanity †," in refusing to comply. This point was not, however, as our author states, immediately abandoned; it was *repeatedly* urged by the French, and as *repeatedly* rejected by us ‡.

The fourth charge, requiring that the laws and constitution of this country should be changed, relative to the liberty of the press, our author also affects to treat as a matter of perfect indiffer-

* Page 7. † Page 8. ‡ See Correspondence.

ence; but from the length at which he argues it, and the pains he has taken in the discussion, he proves that, in reality, he considers it as a matter of importance. The aim of his reasoning is, however, evidently to acquit the French, and to criminate us. He says, "Let us see what is the complaint, and what is the request, and how far it can be said they have required an alteration in our laws and constitution. They complain, that ever since the conclusion of the treaty of Amiens, the English press has not ceased to calumniate and revile the French and their government, to represent their republic in the most odious and degrading light, that the people are appealed to against it, and instigated thereby to insurrection and rebellion *."

With which of the two countries this war of words originated, I confess myself ignorant: I have, however, always understood that the French were the aggressors. This claim to priority, when both parties were so ready to engage, is not worth substantiating; but of this I am positive, that accusation, scurrility, and recrimination of every kind, were wielded with infinitely more virulence and indecency by the Paris than by the London journalists. There was, indeed, one essential distinction which characterized the remarks that

* Page 8.

appeared in this country, and which rendered them more cuttingly offenſive; and this was, that they were, for the moſt part, founded in truth: whereas the retorts and aſperſions which were vomited forth by the Paris editors, were merely the fabrications of jealouſy, hatred, anger, and ſpleen.

Our author proceeds by ſaying, "They obſerve (that is, the French), that the particular laws and conſtitution of Great Britain are ſubordinate to the general principles of the law of nations; that if it be a right in England to allow the moſt extenſive liberty of the preſs, it is a public right of poliſhed nations, and the bounden duty of governments, to prevent, repreſs, and puniſh every attack which might, by thoſe means, be made againſt the rights, the intereſts, and the honour of foreign powers. This," our author exclaims *, "is all but too true, and, I believe, univerſally allowed." Now I believe, that if not univerſally, it is very generally *diſallowed*. If we had refuſed to the French that redreſs which the juriſprudence of the country provides, we ſhould have merited a very ſevere cenſure: but were we to new-model our laws and conſtitution, ſuch as they have happily exiſted for above a century paſt, at the arrogant demand of a foreign power?

* Page 9.

Were we to deviate from the ordinary rules of juſtice; to change the eſtabliſhed forms of our tribunals; to infringe the liberties of the ſubject; to put a padlock on the tongue and pen; and to inſtitute an inquiſitorial court, in which our patriotic author would, no doubt, have had a *French* judge preſide, merely becauſe eight or ten individuals had been in the habit of ſtating that the French were enſlaved, which every one perceived; that the Firſt Conſul was a tyrant, which nobody doubted; that his ambition was inſatiable, which he was every day proving; and that he had been guilty of the moſt atrocious cruelties, which had been clearly brought home to him? If our government had the power of controlling the preſs, and laying it under arbitrary reſtraints and penalties for ſuch offences as theſe, there would be an end at once of all freedom of opinion, of all political inveſtigation, and even of all hiſtorical truth. I am no advocate for the licentiouſneſs of the preſs; I freely acknowledge all its miſchief, and never wiſh it to go unpuniſhed: but when exceſſes are committed, I am an advocate for that mode and meaſure of puniſhment which the known law of the land inflicts, and am a decided enemy to deſpotic fines, captious innovations, or unneceſſary retrenchments; and, above all, to thoſe which are dictated or ſuggeſted by a foreign power. Our courts were open to Buonaparte, as well as to

every other perſon, and before them any one who had given him offence might have been arraigned. But whilſt he knew this, he alſo knew the weakneſs of his cauſe. He perceived the impolicy of proſecuting a ſuit, in which all parties would have been impartially dealt with. He was aware, that a trial on ſuch points would have diffuſed the infamy of his character, and corroborated the proofs of his guilt. *That* was the reaſon why he was deſirous of ſome *French* method of ſtopping theſe unpalatable publications, ſuch as ſecret examination, ſecret impriſonment, ſecret torture, and ſecret death. Yet our author, who diſplays ſo much anxiety for the introduction of this intolerant ſyſtem, affirms that "he is as much attached as any man to the liberty of the preſs *."

He goes on by aſking, "Was it to be expected that the Firſt Conſul ſhould patiently and quietly endure to be ſo perſonally abuſed, and hear the people he commanded perpetually excited to revolt?" The wiſeſt plan he could have adopted, would have been that which was purſued by the Britiſh government with regard to ſimilar publications in France, which was to take no notice of them. But the irritability of his temper preventing *that*, if, after having interdicted their ad-

* Page 9.

miſſion into France, his revenge was ſtill unſatisfied, why did he not have recourſe to the only remedy which our government could offer him, and with which, indeed, it is provided for its own defence, and apply for protection and redreſs to the laws? Were not the late Queen of France, and the late Emperor of Ruſſia, ſurely as auguſt perſonages as Buonaparte, reduced to the ſame neceſſity? And if theſe mighty potentates, deſcended from a long line of illuſtrious anceſtors, nurſed in the very cradle of pomp, accuſtomed from their earlieſt infancy to regal ſtate, and born to empire and command, could ſubmit to appeal to the integrity, and bow to the deciſion, of a Britiſh tribunal, it ſurely could not be regarded as any peculiar condeſcenſion or degradation for Buonaparte, the child of chance, the ſon of an obſcure family in an obſcure iſland, whoſe early life had been paſſed in indigence and neglect, who had been the humble agent of Robeſpierre, and the ferocious executioner of Barras, to purſue the ſame courſe, and (if ſuch it could be conſidered) endure the ſame mortification. But the fact is, he felt the workings of conſcious guilt; he was exaſperated by the veracity of the aſſertions in the Engliſh prints, and alſo by the perfect indifference with which our government for a long time continued to treat even the official abuſe of France. They deſpiſed

the allegations of falſehood; he trembled before the narratives of truth.

Our author aſks, "what was required, or rather what was ſolicited?" for Mr. Otto's note, he obſerves, ſays, "The underſigned has in conſequence received a ſpecial order to *ſolicit* ‖;" and a little further on, he informs us, that we, in anſwer, "talk highly of the liberty of our preſs, and that the French are ſilent, and mention the ſubject no more §."

Now one would really imagine from the above ſtatement, that the French had mentioned the matter *once*; that they had preferred an humble ſolicitation; that we had returned a haughty anſwer; that they had acquieſced; and that nothing more had been ſaid about it. What then are we to think of the candour of our author, when, on referring to the Official Correſpondence, we diſcover that, even in the very document he has ventured to quote, Mr. Otto, the humble Mr. Otto, repreſents the matter as a very ſerious offence *; that Talleyrand, in a converſation with Lord Whitworth, gives him to underſtand that the Firſt Conſul is highly incenſed †; that the Firſt Conſul himſelf, in his conference with Lord Whitworth, declares that "to *preſerve peace* the abuſe in the public prints muſt, if not *totally ſuppreſſed*,

‖ Page 9. § Page 10.
* See Correſpondence, No. 12. † No. 35.

at leaſt be kept within bounds, and confined to the Engliſh papers ‡;" and that General Andreoſſi, in an elaborate note preſented to Lord Hawkesbury, the 29th of March 1803, not only inveighs againſt journaliſts and pamphleteers, but againſt the *ſpeeches of ſome leading Members of Parliament*, and concludes the ſubject with the modeſt propoſal, that the Britiſh preſs ſhould be put under the ſame regulations as thoſe which prevail in France ‖.

Our author next ſays, "There was a time, undoubtedly, when the Firſt Conſul felt anxious to obtain the good opinion and friendſhip of this country *." No doubt there was. But was there ever a time when he would have granted us his good opinion and friendſhip in return? No! We had created a deadly and unalterable hatred in his breaſt by the vigour with which we had oppoſed him, by the check which we had given to his arms and his ambition. If, therefore, he was deſirous of our good opinion and friendſhip, it could not be from any motive of benevolence or eſteem; but that he might have a nearer proſpect of deluding us by his perfidy, and a ſafer opportunity of ſacrificing us to his revenge; that he might, under the maſk of diſſimulation, undermine our reſources, impede our views, fruſtrate

‡ Correſpondence, No. 38. ‖ No. 49. * Page 10.

our hopes, and deſtroy our independence. This, I contend, is by no means aſſuming too wide a field of ſuſpicion. In caſes of this deſcription, when the purport has been defeated, we can only reaſon from analogy. But when I look round, and obſerve the ſlavery and ruin in which (wherever he *has* ſucceeded) his profeſſions towards other ſtates have uniformly terminated, his deſigns to the prejudice of this country are ſufficiently demonſtrated.

After what our author terms a re-examination of the three laſt charges, he comes to the fifth, which is that of affirming, that Great Britain cannot ſingly contend with the power of France, which he alleges, "is too puerile to be commented upon *." Standing alone, it certainly is. If, for example, the muſhroom King of Etruria had made the ſame aſſertion, we ſhould have laughed at it. If it had come, even from Buonaparte, in any other way, we ſhould have deſpiſed it. But when it was deliberately inſerted in a grave report from the executive government of France to the Legiſlative Body, in the deſign of its being circulated through Europe with all the weight and authority which ſuch a government could give to ſuch an act, it aſſumed a very different character. What could be the intention

* Page 12.

of the French cabinet in making ſuch a vaunt? It could not be to conciliate our friendſhip, to flatter our nationality, or to conſolidate our fame. But was it not to endeavour to convince Europe of the exiſtence of the fact; to lower us in their eſtimation; to prove to them that we had degenerated from our ancient character; and that we were ſo completely exhauſted and diſmayed, that we could no longer claim a pretenſion to the high and independent ſituation by which we were formerly diſtinguiſhed. Coupled alſo as it was with other concomitant circumſtances, it was not altogether unlikely to produce ſuch an inference. Buonaparte, having previouſly inculcated the doctrine *, had already formally declared, that we had no longer a right to interfere in the continental concerns of Europe, and to convince us of his determination to act up to the declaration, he was parcelling out kingdoms, and principalities, and republics, at his pleaſure.

Our author ſays, "The ſubſequent paragraph is more worthy our attention."

"But we have better hopes; and we believe, in the Britiſh cabinet, nothing will be liſtened to but the counſels of wiſdom and the voice of

* See the Moniteur of the 29th October 1802, in which this queſtion is diſcuſſed at length in the moſt inſolent terms.

humanity †." If this were not intended as a mockery, why was not the previous unprovoked affront omitted?

Of the ſixth charge, which is the manifeſto publiſhed in the Hamburgh Gazette, our author remarks, "It is not a little ſurpriſing to find inſerted in the catalogue of offences, this manifeſto; for, upon our demand of immediate ſatisfaction, every authority from the French government for the publication of it was denied, and moſt *completely diſavowed* ‡." This is as much as to maintain, that, however flagrant and public any inſult committed by one government towards another may be, although the fact be proved to demonſtration, which, in this inſtance, it certainly was, if the offending government chooſe to diſavow it, the apology is ſufficient, and all ground of complaint is inſtantly removed. By this ſtrange mode of reaſoning, you may circulate the moſt ſcurrilous abuſe without danger, and propagate the moſt infamous falſehoods without reſponſibility. All you have to do on detection, is ſtoutly to deny the fact, and the buſineſs is at once ſettled. It may be worth while to inquire into this affair a little further. Now, as to the fact, it appears that M. Rheinhardt, the French miniſter at Hamburgh, applied, in his official capacity,

† Page 12. ‡ Ibid.

to the Senate of that city, to have inſerted in their Gazette a libel on the Britiſh government. They were convened extraordinarily to conſider how to act in an affair of ſuch delicacy, but they judged it prudent to comply with the demand. "It was their wiſh that they might at leaſt be allowed to omit or qualiſy the moſt offenſive paſſages; but M. Rheinhardt ſaid his orders were poſitive, for the *full and exact* inſertion of the whole *." M. Rheinhardt, however, not yet ſatisfied with the ſucceſs of his exertions, applied to the magiſtrates at Altona, for leave to have it alſo inſerted in their papers; who replied, "that they could not poſſibly permit it without an expreſs order from their government." In conſequence of this refuſal, "M. Dagueſſeau, the French miniſter at the court of Copenhagen, received from his colleague at Hamburgh, a copy of the article, with a requeſt that he would ſolicit the permiſſion of its publication in the Daniſh papers †." This was alſo refuſed. Now is it at all probable that two French miniſters, who well knew the temper and power of their maſter, ſhould have ventured, *without orders*, to have made a requiſition of ſo ſerious and unexampled a nature? and is not what followed a deciſive proof that theſe orders were tranſmitted? It was very eaſy for Talleyrand, after the purpoſe was anſwered, to deny the fact,

* See Correſpondence, No. 71. † No. 72.

and to ſay, "that the Firſt Conſul conſidered Rheinhardt's conduct ſo reprehenſible, that every ſatisfaction might be expected." Was any ſatiſfaction given? Was the only reparation (and that but a poor one) which could be made, granted? Was the fact publicly and formally diſclaimed? Was the Senate of Hamburgh authorized to ſtate, which they would gladly have done, that the inſertion was without authority, that it was a miſunderſtanding, and that it was a groſs and ſcandalous libel? Were Rheinhardt and Dagueſſeau chaſtiſed for their inſolence? Were they diſmiſſed from their offices, or even reprimanded for this pretended breach of inſtruction? The matter ſpeaks for itſelf.

A little farther on our author remarks, that "a futile argument is ſometimes made uſe of, that theſe cauſes are nothing if ſingly taken, but all together amount to a ſufficient one;" and by way, I ſuppoſe, of enlivening his page with a ſpecimen of the fecundity of his wit, he adds, "but if individually they are nothing, and are proved to be ſo, can an aggregate of *nothings* ever amount to any thing*?" Now, whatever our author's eſtimation of them may be, I really never heard any thing like ſuch an aſſertion made; and I think any man, who ſeriouſly advances it, muſt be not

* Page 12.

only deſtitute of common feeling, but of common ſenſe. In the opinion of many, each, ſeparately taken, was a ſufficient cauſe of war. In the opinion of others again, although, individually conſidered, they did not perhaps warrant an immediate recourſe to the laſt extremity, yet, collectively, they furniſhed a very ſtrong caſe. And although we are infinitely obliged to our author for the information, that add nothing to nothing and nothing will be produced, yet, with his permiſſion, we may alſo be allowed the capacity to perceive, that ſeveral ſtrong points added together yield an aggregate of their united ſtrength, and that even trifling cauſes, by repetition, may at laſt amount to ſomething inſupportable.

Our author next conſiders the charge of aggrandizement, and labours hard, though to very little purpoſe, to perſuade us that France is ſtill in the right. He inquires, "whether the ſituation of Europe was eſſentially different at the time of the meſſage, in March 1803, from what it was at the ſigning of the treaty of Amiens, March 1802 *?" I anſwer, Yes! it *eſſentially* was. Piedmont was not then annexed; the clandeſtine arrangement reſpecting Parma was unknown, and conſequently unſuſpected; the encroachments on the Germanic Body had not been finally arranged; the inde-

* Page 13.

pendence of Switzerland, which had been ſolemnly guarantied by a recent treaty, had not been forcibly violated; and the agreement, which France ha entered into to withdraw her troops from Holland, was expected to be punctually obſerved. And are all theſe diſappointments, all theſe aggreſſions, all theſe ſcandalous infractions of the moſt ſacred pledges by which one nation can bind itſelf to another, mere matters of indifference? In the good times of Europe, any one of theſe acts would have rouſed every other ſtate to arms, and have cemented a general league for the repreſſion and chaſtiſement of ſuch iniquitous proceedings. And becauſe other ſtates have meanly ſhrunk from *their* duty, is a powerful, an honourable, a valiant, and an independent nation like Britain to follow their retrograde and cowardly footſteps? Are we bound to repoſe confidence in the bare *aſſurances* of a government, in whoſe *acts* we can trace nothing but the moſt flagitious perfidy; which, towards every other country, has broken its plighted faith; which, whenever its ſtrength has been ſufficient to enſure impunity to crimes, has overſtepped all dictates of honour, all principles of juſtice, and all bounds of decency; and which, in addition to theſe proofs of an unprincipled mind, has, in numberleſs inſtances, teſtified an unremitting propenſity to reduce us to the ſame helpleſs and contemptible ſituation? By way of illuſtration to his mode of reaſoning,

our ingenious author propounds the following queſtion: "If," ſays he, "a man has taken my purſe, of what conſequence is it whether he holds it in his hand or put it into his pocket *?"— So that if a thief got hold of a purſe, if he were but a *French thief* (which I take to be our author's meaning), he would have him quietly keep it, and would diſapprove of any interference which might diſappoint him of his prey. But independently of the turpitude of ſuch a doctrine, which goes to the total diſmemberment of ſocial life, the caſe is far from being a parallel one. In the above inſtances, France had never obtained an abſolute poſſeſſion. Her troops had been admitted conditionally, at leaſt by implication, and formal contracts had been ſince entered into, explicitly declaring, that the independence of the countries ſhould be inviolably preſerved †. Whether the treaties reſpecting Piedmont, Switzerland, and Holland, were made with us or with any other power, was perfectly immaterial. With whomſoever they were made, it was natural to ſuppoſe that they would be executed; and the treaty of Amiens, being founded on a baſis which bore an immediate reference to the relative ſituation of Great Britain and France ‡, any material change in that ſituation, to our evident diſadvantage,

* Page 13. † See the treaty of Luneville, and that between France and the Batavian republic. ‡ Correſpondence, No. 45.

became a point of infinite conſequence to us. Did the Firſt Conſul's exclamation of "*Ce ſont des bagatelles*," alluding to Piedmont and Switzerland, diminiſh their real importance, or tranſmute the original and acknowledged principles of the treaty, thoſe general and conſtituent materials on which the whole fabric was reared? Was not this country alſo peculiarly intereſted in the independence of the Batavian republic, and did it not by the third article of the treaty of Amiens make an almoſt general reſtitution of her colonies, evidently under that impreſſion? Can the idea be for a moment entertained that it was the deſign of the Britiſh government to place all theſe rich and valuable ſettlements in the hands of France?

Theſe unjuſtifiable pretenſions and acts on the part of France aſſumed alſo an alarming aſpect in another point of view. They, in ſome degree, developed the inſidious deſigns of the Firſt Conſul, and, by proclaiming that he was not to be reſtrained by any written agreement, they naturally awakened our jealouſies and fears, and pointed out to us the neceſſity of looking more cloſely to our own ſecurity. Our author ſays, that "Buonaparte declared he would withdraw his troops the moment the treaty of Amiens was fully completed on our part, and Malta evacuated according to agree-

ment *." But, by his treaty with Holland, he was bound to withdraw his troops the moment the definitive treaty was ſigned. No diſpute had yet ariſen about Malta, nor were we, even ſuppoſing that all the conditions reſpecting its ſurrender had been punctually fulfilled, pledged to evacuate it before the expiration of three months. France then began the diſpute by a breach of faith, in the obſervance of which we were materially concerned. And what aſſurance or ſecurity did ſhe offer us but her mere word, which ſhe was in the conſtant habit of violating, that ſhe would in this inſtance be ſcrupulous; or how could we expect that ſhe, who in that very identical inſtance had broken her faith with Holland, would not alſo break it with Britain?

The laſt point our author muſters in review is Malta, which, in truth, is one of the moſt prominent cauſes of the preſent war. He ſays, "By the 10th article of the treaty of Amiens, we appear ſpecifically and abſolutely to have agreed to evacuate Malta within the ſpace of three months after the ſignature: we keep it twelve, then demand it for ten years longer; which not being complied with, we commence hoſtilities. What is our defence ‡?" Certainly not ſuch a one as our author ſeems diſpoſed to make.

* Page 15. ‡ Page 16.

Although I am far from thinking that there would have been no war had no dispute arisen about Malta, yet I readily admit, that much discussion and altercation might have been spared, had the possession of Malta been confirmed to us by one of the articles of the treaty. This, however, having been omitted, all we had to do was to look to the specific terms on which we had agreed to surrender it, and to abide by them. Having put our hand and seal to certain conditions, we surely intended that the limitations and restrictions they prescribed should be literally obeyed. What is the meaning of a contract but to bind down the contracting parties to the observance of particular stipulations, which if not in every respect complied with, the bargain is annulled? If this be not the meaning of such an instrument, where is the use of its intervention? for if the parties, at the time of its performance, intended to absolve each other from its contents, the deed itself was in its origin a nonentity. But this is too ridiculous an absurdity to be for a moment entertained. The validity of the deed being then granted, we have only to examine the terms. They are expressed at considerable length, and bear every internal evidence of sincerity and anxiety on our part that they should be accomplished; and if, from no neglect or fault of ours, but in consequence of difficulties and objections thrown out by those powers who were invited to

become guarantees, they were afterwards rendered impracticable, the blame did not lie with us, and we were certainly releaſed from our part of the engagement. Any other arrangement might no doubt have been concerted between the two parties immediately intereſted. That was optional, but the exiſting one was to all intents and purpoſes void. But this buſineſs deſerves a more minute inveſtigation.

Article 10 of the definitive treaty, about which ſo much has been ſaid, is followed, as every body knows, by thirteen ſtipulations.

The 1ſt ſays, That the knights of the Order, whoſe langues ſhall continue to ſubſiſt after the exchange of the ratifications of the preſent treaty, are invited to return to Malta, as ſoon as that exchange ſhall have taken place. They ſhall there form a general chapter, and ſhall proceed to the election of a Grand Maſter, &c.

The 2d, That in order to preſerve the independence of the iſland, there ſhall henceforth be no Engliſh nor French langues.

The 3d, That a Malteſe langue ſhall be eſtabliſhed, to be ſupported out of the land revenues and commercial duties of the iſland—to be en-

dowed with peculiar privileges, which are enumerated. And it is moreover ſtipulated, that the municipal, revenue, civil, judicial, and other offices under the government of the iſland, ſhall be filled, at leaſt in the proportion of one half, by native inhabitants of Malta, Gozo, and Comino.

The 4th, That the forces of his Britannic Majeſty ſhall evacuate the iſland and its dependencies, within three months after the exchange of the ratifications, or ſooner if it can be done: at that period the iſland ſhall be delivered up to the Order in the ſtate in which it now is, provided that the Grand Maſter, or commiſſioners, fully empowered according to the ſtatutes of the Order, be upon the iſland to receive poſſeſſion; and that the force to be furniſhed by his Sicilian Majeſty, as hereafter ſtipulated, be arrived there.

The 5th, That the garriſon of the iſland ſhall at all times conſiſt at leaſt one half of native Malteſe, &c.

The 6th, That the independence of the iſlands of Malta, Gozo, and Comino, as well as the preſent arrangement, ſhall be under the protection and guarantee of Great Britain, France, Auſtria, Ruſſia, Spain, and Pruſſia.

Articles 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, relate to the neutrality of the iſland, and certain commercial and internal regulations.

The 12th, That his Sicilian Majeſty ſhall be invited to furniſh two thouſand men, natives of his dominions, to ſerve as a garriſon for the ſeveral fortreſſes upon the iſland, &c.

The 13th, That the ſeveral powers ſpecified in paragraph 6, ſhall be invited to accede to the preſent arrangement. Such is the ſubſtance of the thirteen paragraphs *.

Our author obſerves, that the fourth "is the only proviſional clauſe †;" but becauſe it is the only proviſional one, is it the only obligatory one? I maintain that every one of the other clauſes is fully as binding. Is not the clauſe in queſtion couched in the ſame terms as the others? Does it not ſay, "The forces of his Britannic Majeſty *ſhall* evacuate," &c. and can the word, "*provided*," in the middle of the ſentence alter the meaning of the word *ſhall* at the commencement? It only provides an additional ſtipulation, and could not by its omiſſion have annulled or invalidated the ſignification of the preceding parts.

* See the Definitive Treaty. † Page 16.

The next paragraph our author mentions is the ſixth, which ſtipulates, that the independence of the iſlands ſhall be under the protection and guarantee of Great Britain, France, &c. Is this language at all equivocal? If to, the ſentence, as it ſtands, had been perfixed—" provided they accept;" here would have been one of our author's proviſional clauſes, which would have done away the preſent import of the word *ſhall*; but, ſtanding alone, it is unqualified and abſolute. Our author remarks on this expreſſion, *ſhall be*, "What! whether they will conſent or not * ?" The inquiry was not made; but the French, who were parties as well as ourſelves, were in cloſe intelligence with ſeveral of the propoſed guarantees, and had better opportunities than we of learning their ſentiments. But why, pray, is the "*ſhall*" in paragraph 4 to have ſuch force, and the "*ſhall*" in paragraph 6 to be diveſted of all ſignification? The anſwer is evident: becauſe it ſuits the purpoſes of our author, and of his friends the French.

Our author next jumps to paragraph 13, in which, with his accuſtomed ſagacity and impartiality, he obſerves that the powers, ſpecified in paragraph 6, are *invited* to accede to the preſent arrangement. The term *invited*, our author ſays,

* Page 17.

is a proof that they had the *power* to refuſe. Nobody ſurely ever thought of denying them the *power*; but we at leaſt hoped and expected that they would comply, and, at all events, we were bound to put the queſtion in a civil manner. Now it is worthy of remark, that the above term occurs twice before in this particular part of the treaty reſpecting Malta; viz. in paragraph 1, the knights of the Order are *invited* to return. We were no ſurer of the *invited knights* than of the *invited guarantees*; yet if the knights, deſpiſing our invitation, had refuſed to return, would the author contend that we were bound to deliver up the iſland? To whom? to the French? Again, paragraph 12, "His Sicilian Majeſty ſhall be *invited* to furniſh two thouſand men." Here the expreſſion is identically the ſame as our author quarrels with above. His Sicilian Majeſty had alſo the power to refuſe; yet, if he had refuſed, would our author ſtill have had us evacuate the iſland, when, by ſuch a refuſal, his favourite ſolitary proviſional clauſe would have been completely invalidated? So much for the candour, and, I may add, for the logic, of our author.

But why were guarantees nominated, and a certain ſet of *langues* agreed on, except as a ſecurity againſt the projects of France, which we were certainly juſtified in ſuſpecting? The *langues*, however, underwent ſuch radical alterations, that

their very conſtitution was vitiated, and their conſequence and independence were totally deſtroyed. Some of the priories were aboliſhed, whilſt others were deprived of their revenues; and as for the guarantees, in conſequence of the obſtinate ſilence of France, they declined acceding to our repeated applications. Now what did our repeated applications and the obſtinate ſilence of France prove? What but our ſincerity and her perfidy? Let us, for a little, examine dates, thoſe ſtubborn criteria of truth. The definitive treaty was ſigned on the 27th day of March 1802, and Malta was to be evacuated on certain conditions (one of the principal of which was, the acceſſion of the propoſed guarantees) three months poſterior to that act. On the 15th of July at Vienna, on the 21ſt of Auguſt at Berlin, and a few days previous to the 17th of September at Peterſburgh, we find, from the official communications of our miniſters at theſe reſpective courts, that the French miniſters had received no inſtructions from their government to join our applications reſpecting the completion of the guarantee *. Were *we* then anſwerable for a deliberate neglect of the French cabinet? Were we the cauſe of difficulty or delay?

Referring again to what paſſed at Peterſburgh, on the 3d of November following, we find General Hedouville, who was the French mini-

* See the Correſpondence.

ſter at that court, ſtating in the preſence of Sir J. B. Warren, the Britiſh miniſter, to the Chancellor of Ruſſia, " that without the guarantee of Ruſſia, either of the two powers (meaning England and France), upon the firſt difference between them, would look upon themſelves at liberty to ſeize the iſland *." Here then, at leaſt, was his opinion of the importance of the guarantees, and particularly of Ruſſia. In conſequence, however, of our perſiſting to retain Malta till the conditions, on which we alone agreed to ſurrender it, were fulfilled, the French government, to ſave appearances, at laſt ordered their miniſters at Berlin and Peterſburgh to apply (their miniſter at Vienna having previouſly applied without orders, and the Emperor having conſented), in conjunction with us. On the 25th of January 1803, we find the crafty Talleyrand, who was not yet acquainted with the conditional acceſſion of the Emperor of Ruſſia, acknowledging to Lord Whitworth, that, generally ſpeaking, the acceſſion of the guarantees was neceſſary; but obſerving (Auſtria having conſented, Pruſſia being at his command, and entertaining ſome doubts about Ruſſia) that the guarantee would be equally complete *without* Ruſſia; admitting alſo that we had ſome pretext to keep Malta, but that it would be ſpeedily removed †. So late, therefore, as the 25th of January 1803, within a few days of ten months

* Correſpondence, No. 33. † No. 35.

after the ſignature of the definitive treaty, we find the wary and cunning Talleyrand differing entirely from the opinion of our author, and allowing that we had a juſtifiable pretext which would be ſoon removed *. Could then, in the name of candour and juſtice, up to this period at leaſt, any blame poſſibly attach to us? Five days after Talleyrand's declaration, viz. on the 30th of January, Sebaſtiani's Report was publiſhed.

About this time the proviſional acceſſion of the Emperor of Ruſſia, which had been ſigned at Peterſburgh on the 24th of November 1802, reached London. It was unfortunately ſuch as we could not conſent to, as its main purport was to aboliſh the Malteſe langue, and to disfranchiſe the native inhabitants of the iſland of all thoſe peculiar privileges with which we had ſtipulated they ſhould be inveſted. But whilſt we lamented this circumſtance, we teſtified every diſpoſition to come to ſome qualified arrangement, which might bring the diſpute to an amicable adjuſtment, and, at the ſame time, ſecure the Malteſe, whom we in honour were bound to protect, in the enjoyment of their rights †. Nothing, however, can diſarm the reſentment of our author, who, ever ready to

* Correſpondence, No. 35.

† Correſpondence, No. 2, of papers ordered to be printed on 26th May.

ſtand forward as the champion of France, in his fatal zeal to ſerve her, is thrown into a heap of inconſiſtencies, among which he totally loſes himſelf. One moment he reproaches us for abandoning the Malteſe, the next for advocating their cauſe; and after abuſing us (though not in terms, yet in fact) for inſiſting on the obſervance of the letter, he accuſes us of flying from the letter, and wiſhing to abide by our interpretation of the ſpirit *.

No ſooner did the French government perceive our diſpoſition to enter into a new arrangement reſpecting Malta (which had been indicated even before the ſentiments of the Emperor of Ruſſia were known), and to give up thoſe advantages which the unforeſeen impracticability of the contract had fairly placed in our hands, than they conſtrued this relaxation into a reſolution to abdicate every thing rather than renew hoſtilities. Governed by ſuch ſentiments, they imagined that they could eaſily terrify us into any terms of ſubmiſſion; and in this perſuaſion, partly by way of bravado, and partly to expoſe and degrade us in the eyes of the world, they thought fit to publiſh Sebaſtiani's Report, wherein they inſolently diſplay the ſcope of their views, and boldly avow the plans they purpoſe adopting to enſure their accompliſhment.

* Page 20.

Although this Report, like every other outrage or aggreſſion on the part of France, is treated by our author with the greateſt levity, it was, fortunately for this country, contemplated by the Government with a more appropriate feeling. The French had now hazarded a ſtep too far, which at once opened our eyes, awakened us to our danger, and put a period to conceſſion. Many of the lies which the Report contains were ſo palpable, that the internal evidence of their falſehood was inſtantly diſcernible. The unqualified publication of them by the government of France was, therefore, an aggravation of the affront. It was adding the provocation of contempt to the indelicacy of abuſe. The critical moment at which it appeared, whilſt matters of no ſmall moment were pending, was an additional proof of their determination to preſerve no friendſhip with us, but, on the contrary, to haraſs and inſult us in a manner that ſhould convince the world that we had no longer the fortitude to reſiſt, and that an attack was all that was neceſſary to ſubdue us. This Report ſtopped at once all further proceedings, and ſo reverſed the viſible poſition of circumſtances, that we now declared a reſolution not to evacuate Malta, until an adequate ſecurity was placed in our hands. Was this more than common ſenſe ſuggeſted, or common diſcretion required? or were we ſtill to go on, ſubmitting to provocations, enduring reproaches, and acquieſ-

cing in encroachment, till not only Malta but England was at the diſpoſal of France? If the public concerns of the nation had been intruſted to the management of our author, we ſhould in all probability have ſhortly had to deplore ſuch an humiliation. Our author, who takes ſuch a charitable view of this ſcandalous official production, and regards it in ſo venial, and even ſo jocular a light, aſks, "What does this curious paper ſay *?" *Curious* I admit it is: what it *ſays* is palpable to the intellect of every one who reads it. It is ſufficiently inſulting to excite reſentment; it is ſufficiently intelligible to awaken ſuſpicion; it is ſufficiently declaratory to require explanation.

Things began now to wear a ſerious complexion. France had indiſcreetly promulgated her intentions. She had plainly demonſtated that her ultimate object was war, but that her previous aim was to tarniſh our fame, to weaken us by negotiation, and to ſtir up a ſpirit of implacable vengeance among her people, by endeavouring to perſuade them that we were the aggreſſors, the violators of public faith, the oppreſſors of independent ſtates, and an impetuous, ambitious, and perfidious race, with whom it was impoſſible to live on terms of amity and good-will. This, indeed, was the evident policy of France. She

* Page 21.

had objects of moment to accomplish before war could be declared with advantage. The departure of the expedition to Louisiana, the termination of her troubles in her colonies, the return of her West India fleet: these were all matters of importance. Nor was she, in other respects, in a state of sufficient preparation. She had not yet sufficiently recovered from the severe shocks she had sustained in the course of the last war. She had also the re-establishment of her manufactures, the revival of her commerce, and the restoration of her navy, very much at heart. Thus, although she had afforded positive indications of her intention to renew hostilities, it was nearly as clear that her design was to wait till she had completed those manifold arrangements which would ensure the likelihood of waging them with success: and it was only her mistaken notion of our faculties and courage, added to her own ungovernable desire of revenge, that betrayed her into an error which she may long have occasion to mourn.

When, however, she found that we were so sensitive; that we were not so completely sunk in lethargy; that we had some sense of honour, and some energy of action, left; that, although we were disposed to bear a good deal, there was a point beyond which we might be provoked to resistance: when she discovered all this, she, at the same moment, discovered the folly of her conduct. She then perceived that she had taken an

injudicious and precipitate ſtep; that ſhe had prematurely diſcloſed her plans; and that an immediate war might involve her in difficulties from which ſhe would not eaſily extricate herſelf. Theſe, and theſe alone, were her reaſons for wiſhing to temporize, to amuſe us by promiſes, and to delay for a few months the ſingle-handed experiment. But it was now too late: the Rubicon was paſſed. We now ſaw into her real character; and goaded and tired out as we had been by the unworthy ſituation in which we had ſo long been mocked, we became peremptory in our turn; and the French refuſing to comply, and ſtill aiming to gain time by a repetition of the tricks by which ſhe had already deluded us, a period was at laſt put to negotiation, and war commenced.

If this country had been influenced by the councils, and guided by the accommodating politics of our author, we might, I grant, have remained a little longer at peace; becauſe we ſhould have continued yielding till we had nothing elſe to yield, rather than have taken up arms in defence of our rights. The French might have ſeized the whole of the continent—that, in our author's opinion, did not concern us! they might have gained poſſeſſion of Malta, and of all the iſlands in the Adriatic, the Archipelago, and the Mediterranean—they were not worth contending

for! they might have conquered Egypt, and have added it indiſſolubly to their European empire—our fears, reſpecting any injury which might ariſe from that quarter to our Indian poſſeſſions, were perfectly prepoſterous! In ſhort, had we followed our author's judgment, we might have waited till the power of France became ſo gigantic and ſo conſolidated, ſo rich in reſources, ſo abundant in means, ſo provided on every ſide with weapons of defence and attack, that the political exiſtence of this country would have depended on her charity. Lying thus at her mercy, we ſhould have been the abject ſlaves of her meaneſt paſſions, and the humble ſuitors for any benefits which her deſpotic will condeſcended to grant. We ſhould have been at the diſpoſal of a tyrant whoſe moſt fervent and moſt conſtant wiſh is our deſtruction; and who, in every thing that regarded *us*, in obedience to the governing impulſe of his nature, would have conſulted his vengeance in preference to his intereſt.

Now it had been, till of late years, the uniform policy of all the great powers of Europe, throughout their hiſtory, at leaſt ever ſince their civilization, to adhere pretty ſteadily to a certain principle of action, which had in view the preſervation of a political balance. This wiſe conduct, whilſt it was conſiſtent with the general good, tended alſo to their own individual ſecurity and

happineſs. Thus, when any particular ſtate was aiming at an augmentation of power which was likely to endanger the independence or diſturb the peace of the reſt, confederacies were immediately formed to terminate its encroachment and confine its ambition. The deſire of ſelf-preſervation is the ſtrongeſt impulſe of humanity. It operates on communities as well as individuals, and is equally acknowledged by the maxims of morality and the precepts of religion. An impulſe, ſo authorized and ſo univerſal, cannot poſſibly be at variance with any conſtitution of things that is founded in juſtice or nature; and if we could ſuppoſe any conventional law that attempted to contravene ſo poſitive and indiſputable a right, we ſhould be at no loſs to decide which ought to preponderate. But the practice of mankind has ſeldom called this right in queſtion; and it has ever been allowed by the moſt enlightened ſtateſmen, the moſt learned juriſts, and even the moſt romantic metaphyſicians, that the mere circumſtance of a nation rapidly becoming more powerful than any of its neighbours, is not only a cauſe of remonſtrance, but, if that be not attended to, a juſtification of attack. It is, indeed, the conſtant operation of theſe general principles which has been the chief means of preſerving, through ſo many centuries, the ſame diviſion of Europe. To maintain, therefore, that France *has the right* to trample down all theſe fences, and ſet at con-

temptuous defiance all these established rules and maxims, sanctioned as they have been by the wisdom and consent of ages, merely because it is *her will and pleasure so to do*; and that, whilst she is swallowing up the weaker states, seizing on extensive territories, transferring people, like cattle, from one master to another, without consulting their prejudices or interests, and almost reversing the order of nature: whilst she is, moreover, evidently committing these flagitious acts of violence, as a preparatory step to a more successful attack on the general liberties of mankind, to maintain that *we*, a near neighbour and an eternal rival, have no right to interfere, is assuming a doctrine which is not only resisted by every motive of discretion and self-defence, but which is in direct contradiction to the acknowledged maxims of natural, conventional, or public law, and to the common practice and experience of mankind. As, therefore, by opposing this novel system there is no breach of morality, no infringement of right, no deviation from custom, or no violation of nature, there can be no reason of policy which ought to superinduce our departure from what, abstractedly considered, is a self-evident axiom, and, relatively considered, is a most sacred and essential duty.

Our author expresses his surprise that we should entertain so strong a conception of the immediate

designs of the First Consul upon Egypt, "though he repeatedly avers he has none *." But though he disavowed *immediate* designs, did he not tell Lord Whitworth that he had *designs*—that, *sooner or later*, Egypt would belong to France, and that Sebastiani's mission was not merely a *commercial* one, as Talleyrand had represented it, but a *military* one †? What then were we to understand from the general tenour of his conversation? What, but that the possession of Egypt was one of his darling objects, and that he would gratify himself the moment he could accomplish it with safety? Even Talleyrand admitted, "that the jealousy we felt on the score of Egypt, with a view to our possessions in India, was natural ‡;" and although our author can perceive no foundation for such a feeling, I think, of the two opinions, that of the French minister, especially as it was an admission to his own prejudice, is entitled to the greatest deference.

Our author next finds fault with the final proposal, and, quite regardless of circumstances or facts, reprobates our conduct in the severest terms. "The French," he says, "ask in amazement, Is there an example in the records of history, of so imperious an ultimatum ||?" To this question I shall merely refer *them* to their own

* Page 22. † Correspondence, No. 38. ‡ No. 37.
|| Page 23.

records for an anſwer. But *our author* paſſes the ſame judgment, and, with affected candour, adds, "Let us caſt away prejudice and partiality, and aſk, was it *not* a moſt imperious ultimatum?" As for our author's *prejudice and partiality*, I can diſcover none that he has to caſt away, except what is in favour of the French; and of that kind, I own, I can diſcover a conſiderable quantity. But *my* anſwer to the queſtion is, that, ſo far from thinking the ultimatum a *moſt imperious one*, I think it, conſidering what had paſſed, *a moſt mild one*; and this I ſhall alſo prove.

In conſequence of the numerous aggreſſions of France, which, according to the acknowledged baſis on which the definitive treaty was eſtabliſhed, entitled us to compenſation; in conſequence of ſtill further views declared, in ſeveral official documents, by the government of France; and in conſequence of the total impracticability of fulfilling the arrangement relative to the ceſſion of Malta; we, in order to bring to an amicable ſettlement theſe complicated ſubjects of diſpute, and to eaſe our minds reſpecting the future deſigns of France on Egypt, propoſed that Malta ſhould remain ours in perpetuity; and that Holland and Switzerland ſhould be evacuated by the French troops. In return, we offered to confirm to France the poſſeſſion of the iſland of Elba,

and to acknowledge the King of Etruria, and the Italian and Ligurian republics *. This was ſurely moderate enough, when regarded as a ſatisfaction and a counterpoiſe for the immenſe continental acquiſitions of France; a right founded on formal agreement, and which Talleyrand, even in diſcuſſing this very point, had willingly admitted †. This propoſal was made on the 7th of April 1803, at Paris. On the 13th, Rheinhardt's libel in the Hamburgh Gazette was known in London, with all the circumſtances attending that ſcandalous publication ‡. On the ſame day, however, notwithſtanding this freſh inſult, finding that the French had declared, that their objection to our perpetual retention of Malta was inſuperable, Lord Hawkeſbury inſtructed Lord Whitworth, if he found their reluctance to the firſt propoſition could not be overcome, to offer two others, as circumſtances rendered it adviſable, as modifications. By the firſt of theſe it is ſtipulated, that, inſtead of complete ſovereignty, the civil government of the iſland ſhould be given to the Order of St. John, but that the fortifications ſhould be occupied in perpetuity by his Majeſty's troops; by the ſecond, that the iſland ſhould remain in our poſſeſſion for a limited number of years ||. Surely nothing could be more moderate, or more plainly demonſtrate a fin-

* Correſpondence, No. 50. † No. 53. ‡ No. 55.
|| No. 56.

cere defire, on the part of the Britifh government, to bring the bufinefs to a fpeedy and conciliatory iffue.

On the 17th of April, Lord Whitworth had an interview with Jofeph Buonaparte, and the firft propofition having been abfolutely rejected, fubmitted the fecond to his confideration. This propofition was alfo objected to, and regarded as an infurmountable impediment. The laft propofition, however, which Lord Whitworth had received orders to make, as occafion might require, was foreftalled by Buonaparte's brother, who faid, "that he was not without hope that he might be authorized to propofe the occupation of the fortreffes for a term of years *." Talleyrand alfo, the fame morning, fuggefted to Lord Whitworth the fame mode of coming to an arrangement †. It thus appears, that the principal claufe of this ultimatum, which our author affirms is fo outrageoufly arrogant, originated with the French government; and that, after concert and deliberation, the identical propofition, in the identical language, came from two of the Firft Conful's moft confidential advifers. Here then were ftrong grounds of hope that an adjuftment would fpeedily take place. The following evening Lord Whitworth again faw Jofeph Buona-

* Correfpondence, No. 58. † Ibid.

parte, who aſſured him "that he ſhould hear from Talleyrand in the courſe of the next morning, and that a meeting would be appointed, in order to ſettle the *term of years* for which the Firſt Conſul might be induced to conſent to the ceſſion of Malta *." Talleyrand, however, never came; and on the 20th, no further notice having been taken of the appointment, not even a line of apology ſent, Lord Whitworth wrote to his Court for freſh orders †. Three days were ſuffered to elapſe in this mortifying ſtate of ſuſpenſe, when Lord Whitworth, hearing nothing more on the ſubject, on the 21ſt called on Talleyrand, who *ſtill* encouraged the idea of an arrangement on the baſis of a temporary poſſeſſion ‡. As there had now been plenty of time for conſultation in the French cabinet, things apparently bore a very promiſing aſpect; but on ſeeing Talleyrand the very next day, Lord Whitworth was, to his utter aſtoniſhment, informed, "that the Firſt Conſul would, on no terms, hear of a perpetual or *temporary* poſſeſſion of Malta ‖." So that the moment they perceived we yielded one point, they puſhed us to another. When we were perſuaded to abandon that, they themſelves propoſed a third, which when we conſented to, they abruptly put an end to the queſtion, by telling us we muſt give up every thing. The ultimatum

* Correſpondence, No. 59. † Ibid. ‡ No. 61. ‖ Ibid.

ſent by our Court was the conſequence of this ſhuffling perfidy, in which, inſtead of riſing in our demands, we adhered to the very propoſition which had been ſtarted by the French government; and even, in order to ſave the honour of France, at which our author is ſo indignant, we made an additional conceſſion, and propoſed the ſecret articles *. Several other contrivances were afterwards reſorted to by the French government to renew the negotiation on a different ground, which were evidently only intended to gain time. We demanded a categorical anſwer: none was given: Lord Whitworth conſequently left Paris, and the following week the war commenced.

Hoſtilities, which I have proved we were, throughout the negotiation, ſo ſtudious to avoid, being thus decreed, our peaceable and patriotic author expreſſes a hope that they may be abridged by the friendly interpoſition of Ruſſia. I alſo wiſh, and moſt ardently too, that the war may be a ſhort one; but I fancy we ſhould differ materially in our manner of bringing it to a concluſion. Now, with regard to the interference of Ruſſia, or indeed of any other continental power, after what has paſſed, we cannot ſurely be too wary in liſtening to any overtures which may come from ſo ſuſpicious a quarter. After the manner in which theſe ſtates have betrayed and deſerted their own intereſts—after the mutual

* Correſpondence, No. 70.

fears and jealouſies which have been manifeſted, and which have operated as an hindrance towards any common effort for their common ſalvation—after the puſillanimous ſubmiſſion, whether friendſhip or fear be pleaded, it matters not, which they have uniformly diſplayed towards France—after the little regard they have ſhewn for public faith, and the indifferent facility with which they have evaded or cancelled the moſt ſolemn and deliberate acts, the policy of this country is too obvious to be miſtaken.

We have unhappily diſcovered, that ſuch is the profligate wickedneſs of the political creed of the French government, that a written engagement, accompanied with every ſanctified and ceremonious formality, is worth no more than the parchment on which it is engroſſed. We muſt therefore look to other ſecurities, and, ſince we have been again compelled to take up arms by the inſatiable ambition and abandoned perfidy of the preſent tyrant of France, I truſt that the Government of this country will give ear to no terms, from whatever quarter they may come, unleſs they be ſuch as will, to a certainty, prevent at leaſt a *ſpeedy* recurrence of the miſeries of war. With or without the mediation of other powers (for we are neither bound by gratitude, nor conſtrained by neceſſity, to look up to them), we ſhall, I truſt, take care to retain in our own

keeping ſuch ſecurities as will, to a moral certainty, obviate a repetition of paſt mortifications, and command a fair proſpect of undiſturbed repoſe.

Our author ſays, "If we perſiſt in rejecting all conciliatory projects from Ruſſia, who has marked a diſapproval of our conduct, what muſt Europe think of us? How will the Dutch feel the ſituation we have brought them into? the Swiſs, the Romans, the Neapolitans * ?" And pray, under what particular obligations are we to theſe enchained and unhappy countries? We may wiſh, as we certainly do, from policy, as well as humanity, to reſcue them from the cruel ſcourge of French domination; but certainly we may be allowed to act without conſulting them, nor is it at all requiſite that our conduct ſhould quadrate with theirs. "What will the different countries of Europe think of *us?*" Why, in ſpite of their envy or their hatred, they muſt think that we are a great and magnanimous people, worthy of the rights we enjoy, and, I had almoſt ſaid, of the pre-eminent bleſſings by which the bounty of Providence has diſtinguiſhed us. But let them chiefly think of *themſelves*, and not be perplexed about us, except in the view of contraſting our conduct with theirs, and of profit-

* Page 24.

ing by our glorious example. Let them think, that the very names of many of them are blotted from the map of Europe. Let them think of their former greatneſs, independence, proſperity, and happineſs, and of their preſent grovelling ſlavery; and let ſuch thoughts ſtimulate them to exertions which may yet redeem them from the miſery and infamy under which they have long been languiſhing.

Our author next attempts to prove that Malta is of very little conſequence, though he admits the probability of the French having taken poſſeſſion of it, had it been evacuated by our troops. Egypt he regards nearly in the ſame light, though he alſo admits, that it would, perhaps, have become a French colony if we had not interfered. But if the French conſidered them of ſuch importance, as to run the riſk of going to war for their attainment, it is at leaſt a proof of *their* opinion of their value. He then enters into a kind of Cretan labyrinth, to prove the difficulty of Buonaparte's getting to India, and, above all, of driving us out; and concludes with this conſolatory remark, that "even granting that he has overcome every obſtacle, and really driven us out of the Indies, ſhall we pay ſo bad a compliment to, think ſo meanly of, our reſources, as to affirm we ſhall even then be

ruined and undone *?" I really think we *ſhould be*; for if we had not the courage to go to war for the preſervation of ſuch objects, we ſhould not only, by their loſs, be deprived of an immenſe ſource of proſperity and wealth, but all ſenſe of honour, and all love of glory, would be already extinct; and the moment the French ſummoned our own iſland to ſubmit, we ſhould, in all probability, ſurrender it. But not being quite ſo ſpiritleſs and reduced, not being ſo totally loſt to all ſenſe of infamy and ſhame, what ſhould we have gained by an immediate compliance with the haughty demands of France relative to the evacuation of Malta? Why this: inſtead of Britiſh troops, French troops would at this moment have had poſſeſſion of that celebrated fortreſs, from which we are daily deriving ſuch ſignal advantages; and the renewal of hoſtilities might have been deferred till that event took place, which, in all likelihood, would have happened in the courſe of a month or ſix weeks, for I cannot bring myſelf to believe (even if Government had had earlier the benefit of our author's advice) that we ſhould have allowed them firſt to make the conqueſt of India, or even of Egypt. But our prudent politician entertains an oppoſite claſs

* Page 27.

of opinions, and, ſo far from approving of our ſyſtem of oppoſing Buonaparte in his ſchemes, ſays, "Should he perſiſt in his wild plans reſpecting Egypt, it would be the worſt policy this country could adopt to obſtruct them *." I really wonder he did not go a little farther, and recommend our government lending him a Britiſh army, to enable him more firmly to eſtabliſh his ſway.

Our author, whom I have now traced, and I think I may venture to ſay, confuted, through all his moſt important paſſages, ſtarted with a ſet of erroneous notions, to which he has, throughout his tract, adhered with the moſt unconquerable pertinacity. But his premiſes being falſe, even admitting that, in ſome few inſtances (for I will not grant him many), his reaſoning is juſt, his concluſions muſt ſtill bear the counterfeit ſtamp of the materials from which they have been derived. He ſays we have broken our faith reſpecting Malta. I ſay we have not. Here we are completely at iſſue: but, unfortunately for him, he has only the whimſies of his own brain to refer to; whereas I am ſupported by the incontrovertible evidence of facts, and the treaty.

* Page 28.

At this time, it would be uſeleſs to go at any greater length into the queſtion. Every body has read the Correſpondence, and, ſetting apart a few wrong-headed, and I may add *wrong-hearted*, individuals, whom no conviction can reclaim, I have with me, not only reſpecting the policy, but the *abſolute neceſſity*, of the preſent war, an united nation. It is not an intricate problem, wrapped up in myſtery and doubt, requiring any peculiar ſubtlety of reaſon to unravel, or any peculiar force of comprehenſion to underſtand; but it is a plain and palpable propoſition, open to general obſervation, and to the conception of which the moſt obtuſe, as well as the moſt enlightened, mind is equally competent. This being the caſe, and not only general, but, with a very few exceptions, univerſal opinion running in the ſame channel, one may ſurely, without arrogance, pronounce him to be wrong (whatever his own notions of his ſuperior judgment and penetration may be), who puts in his diſſentient voice.

There is one important charge contained in the Declaration, which our author (conſidering it, no doubt, as unworthy of remark) has entirely overlooked; which is the outrageous indignity offered perſonally by Buonaparte, at his own court, in the preſence of the foreign miniſters and two hundred people, to the Britiſh Ambaſſa-

dor, who had come to pay him his reſpects. This was the opportunity which the upſtart Firſt Conſul ſelected, groſſly to inſult the repreſentative of one of the firſt crowned heads in Europe, and to accuſe the Britiſh government of a breach of faith. " *Ils ne reſpectent pas les traités. Il faut dorénavant les couvrir de crepe noir. Malheur à ceux qui ne reſpectent pas les traités* *." Such were the phraſes he made uſe of, adding menace to reproof. If ſuch a charge, in ſuch language, could, under any circumſtances, be juſtified, no one can pretend to defend or extenuate it as it ſtands; and it is, incontrovertibly, the moſt indecent dereliction of all ceremony and decorum that is on record. And what was his apology? An aſſurance that nothing ſimilar ſhould again occur †. Was this a ſatisfaction for ſuch an outrage? To draw an illuſtration from private life, it might as well be maintained, that if one man pulls another by the noſe, and promiſes never to do it again, he has made every reparation which the laws of honour require. What was it then but an aggravation of the inſult?

Our author, as if ſenſible that the opinions he has ſupported, and the doctrines he has broached, are ſuch as are not unlikely to create a little irrita-

* Correſpondence, No. 43. † No. 46.

tion in the feelings of his countrymen, towards the conclusion, testifies a little compunction, and, in order to make some atonement, and to prevail on his reader to lay him aside with less ill-humour and disgust, to our great surprise informs us, that "his opinion of the Chief Consul differs but little from that of the generality of mankind; that he feels, equally with others, the injustice of his usurpation, and the rigour of his despotism; and if what he is accused of is true, of which he fears there is hardly a doubt, there are few epithets that can be bestowed upon him fouler than he deserves *." And, to prove that he should rejoice if he had paid the forfeit of his crimes, for the benefit of scholars, he favours us with a Greek quotation.

His conclusion is still more extraordinary. After having exerted, through the course of *twenty-nine* closely-printed pages, all his ingenuity to persuade the country that the government has been violent, hasty, treacherous, and, in every instance, completely in the wrong, he reserves *one* to tell us that he wishes them success. After having strenuously endeavoured to render them culpable in the eyes of the nation for having gone to war, and, as far as indifference or opposition

* Page 29.

could be ſtirred up by the diffuſion of ſuch ſentiments, to throw every impediment in their way, he ſays, "Far be it from me to impede the chance of that deſirable event, a reaſonable peace, by diſturbing the operations of Government, or checking the energies of the country*." Fortunately *that* is beyond the reach of his ability: but I will put the queſtion flatly to him, by what means could he have more artfully or more induſtriouſly ſtriven to accompliſh miſchief, and diſſeminate diſcontent, than by thoſe he has purſued in his work? With this obſervation I ſhall diſmiſs our author, and, after two or three additional remarks, ſhall quit a ſubject which has been, in various ways, ſo amply diſcuſſed, and which is ſo generally underſtood.

I have no ſcruple in ſaying, that I regard the preſent war (and I know that I am joined by the almoſt unanimous opinion of my country) as a war into which (after every teſtimony of ſincerity and moderation to which it was poſſible for an independent government to ſtoop) we have been abſolutely forced, by the ſhameleſs aggreſſion, intolerable inſolence, abandoned perfidy, and wicked ambition, of the tyrant of France; as a war not only neceſſary to our proſperity, our ho-

* Page 29.

nour, and our defence, but to our very ſalvation and exiſtence; and which, ſo far from being a ſubject of reprobation or regret, is the only event that could ſnatch us from bondage and perdition. Buonaparte, if he had acted with common caution, ſuch was, for a long time, our unſuſpicious flexibility, might have enſnared us; but the impetuoſity of his paſſions, the irritability of his temper, the abſurdity of his vanity, and the madneſs of his ambition, got the better of all political prudence, and diſcloſed his views before they were ripe for execution. His character is now completely revealed; it is before the world, ſtripped of the load of tinſel which ſkreened it from the eyes of the common obſerver, and is expoſed, in its genuine colours, to the contemplation of the multitude. Diveſted of the gaudy trappings with which ſucceſs had decorated it, it is now an object of univerſal abhorrence and execration. The public ſpirit of this country has alſo taken deep root. Loyalty and patriotiſm have ariſen, and pervade the great body of the people, who are convinced of the neceſſity of cordially uniting in defence of their common rights, to ſave their common country from becoming a prey to perhaps the worſt man that fortune ever raiſed from obſcurity to extended rule. His ill-judged rupture with this land of freemen will probably curtail his de-

ſolating career; and, obedient as we are to the exhortations of duty, we may confidently look forward to a proſperous, and, if things are conducted with vigour and ſkill, to a ſpeedy, termination of the conflict.

THE END.

S. Gosnell, Little Queen Street, Holborn.

*The following LOYAL ADDRESSES, published by* JOHN STOCKDALE, 181, Piccadilly, *are particularly recommended for Distribution throughout* Great Britain *and* Ireland.

1. Invasion.—Scene of a Play } With characteristic Prints.
2. ———.—Scene 2d of a Play }
3. Corporal Trim on the Invasion.
4. John Bull to Brother Patrick in Ireland.
5. Declaration of the City, with Bosanquet's Speech.
6. Rise in Defence of your Country.
7. Letter to the Volunteers.
8. To the Inhabitants of the British Isles.
9. To the United Kingdom.
10. Massacre of Grenada.
11. Solemn Appeal to the British Nation.
12. Rev. Gerrard Andrewes's Address.

The above Price 1*d*. each, or 6*s*. per Hundred.

Also

Abridgment of the Postscript to Hunter's Vindication.
Speech of R. B. Sheridan, Esq.
A few Facts to shew the Ambition of France.
Substance of Mr. Pitt's celebrated Speech.
The Speech of Earl Moira.
} Price 6*d*. each, or 4*s*. per dozen.

Vindication of the Cause of Great Britain. By W. Hunter, Esq. 2*s*.

Candid Appeal to Public Confidence. By T. M. Moore, Esq. Price 1*s*.

Vindication of Europe, by Gentz. 2*s*. 6*d*.

A Sketch of all the Invasions of the British Isles, from the Landing of William the Conqueror to the present Time; with a coloured Chart, on which every Attempt is delineated. Second Edit. Price 2*s*. 6*d*.

Reflections on the present Crisis of Public Affairs. By Charles Tweedie, Esq. Price 2*s*.

Germanic Empire reduced into Departments. Price 2*s*. 6*d*.

Bonaparté's Correspondence during the Negotiation for Peace. 2*s*. 6*d*.

Correspondence between the Governments of Great Britain and France, subsequent to the Treaty of Amiens. 2 Parts, Price 3*s*. 6*d*.

Woodfall's Parliamentary Register for 1803—In Four Vols. Price 2*l*. 11*s*. Half-bound.

The Importance of Egypt and Malta. By Col. Mark Wood, M. P. in 4to. with a Map. Price 5*s*. in boards.

The Reason Why—In answer to a Pamphlet intituled, Why do we go to War? Price 1*s*. 6*d*.

Thoughts on the French Invasion. By Gen. Dumourier, 4to. with a Map. Fourth Edition, Price 1*s*. 6*d*.

The reason why in answer to a pamphlet entitled, 'Why do we go to war?'

London 1803

Eur. 1024 r
urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10409595-7